

State of California
Department of Water Resources
State Water Resources Control Board
Department of Health Services

2002 RECYCLED WATER TASK FORCE
PUBLIC EDUCATION & OUTREACH WORKGROUP
MINUTES OF
16 JULY 2002 MEETING

Meeting Time and Location

9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., July 16, 2002, Chamber Boardroom, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, Wyndham Emerald Plaza Building, 402 West Broadway, 10th Floor, San Diego, California.

Attendance

Task Force Members Present

Kirk Bone	Serrano Associates LLC
Herman C. Collins	Collins Strategic Group, Inc.
Jonas Minton	Department of Water Resources
William T. VanWagoner	East Valley Water Recycling Project L. A. Depart. of Water and Power

Via Phone

Dan Carlson	Utilities Department City of Santa Rosa
Ane D. Deister	El Dorado Irrigation District
Keith Israel	Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency
Frances Spivy-Weber	Mono Lake Committee
Marguerite Young	California Clean Water Action

Workgroup Members Present

Suzanne Arena	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Fawzi Karajeh	Department of Water Resources Office of Water Use Efficiency
Maria G. Mariscal	San Diego County Water Authority
Katie Shulte Joung	Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Via Phone

Lois Humphreys	Leucadia County Water District
Nancy King	Department of Water Resources
Marilyn Smith	Irvine Ranch Water District
Lori Steere	East Bay Municipal Utilities District Office of Water Recycling
Al Vargas	California Department of Food and Agriculture

Others Present

Harold Bailey	Padre Dam MWD
Mike Bresnahan	City of San Diego - Water Department
Albert Frias	Water Replenishment District of Southern California
Dick Heil	Eastern Municipal Water District
Hossein Juybari	City of San Diego Water Department

Richard Mills	State Water Resources Control Board
Lou Monville	O'Reilly Public Relations
Rafael Mujeriego	Orange County Water District
John Ruetten	Resource Trends, Incorporated
H. Eric Schockman	University of Southern California
Jim Sham Loufard	City of San Diego - Water Department
Patricia Tennyson	Katz & Associates, Incorporated
Cynthia A. Vicknair	CynKat Communications Image Architecture
Muriel Watson	Revolting Grandmas
Adeline M. L. Yoong	Water Replenishment District of Southern California

Via Phone

Luana Kiger	Department of Water Resources Office of Water Use Efficiency
Ron Wildermuth	Orange County Water District
Jenny Glasser	Orange County Water District
Cindy Ferch	Orange County Water District

Summary of Proceedings

The lead staff for the Task Force from the Department of Water Resources Fawzi Karajeh welcomed the participants to the first Public Education and Outreach Workgroup meeting. Mr. Karajeh read the workgroup's charge and went over the agenda before introducing the Workgroup's Chair, Jonas Minton of the Department of Water Resources, and Co-chair, Herman Collins of Collins Strategic Group, Inc., as well as the professional facilitator, Dr. Eric Schockman. Members of the workgroup and public participants then introduced themselves. Thereafter, the Co-chair of the Workgroup, Herman Collins, conducted the meeting through a preset agenda (a copy is attached).

A. Presentation by Patricia Tennyson on the San Diego Repurification Project

Patricia Tennyson, Katz & Associates, Inc., presented a history of the San Diego Repurification Project starting with the project's inception just after the drought of 1991 and 1992. Although 1993 and 1994 were wet years, the city and San Diego County Water Authority continued to research and plan the project in anticipation of future droughts. The public outreach included almost 100 one-on-one interviews with city residents from diverse backgrounds, telephone interviews, and focus groups. Sixty percent of the telephone interview respondents favored the project when it was described. The Department of Health Services approved the project, and representatives from various groups backed the project. In 1994, an independent panel of scientists endorsed the project. A citizens advisory committee examined the project in detail and concluded it would provide a needed source of water for the region. The initial San Diego Union-Tribune editorial about the project stated the "repurified water" is safe, but questioned if the region could afford it. Further outreach work included a brochure and related fact sheets, a video describing the project, a slide presentation, a speakers bureau effort, taste tests (where repurified water was clearly favored), feature stories in newspapers and other media outlets, and a telephone information line.

In 1995, the San Diego City Council, replacing the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) as the project sponsor, supported further action. The scientific review, citizens advisory group conclusion and broad support from a variety of organizations in the city provided a foundation for this action. In 1996, the responsibility for the project shifted from the City of San Diego Water Department to the City's Wastewater Department. The SDCWA began to pursue the Imperial Irrigation District agricultural water transfer around this same time.

Despite solid support from a wide variety of community organizations, factors shifted against Repurification Project during 1998: the water transfer supply was less controversial and less expensive, the project got caught up in the political campaigning at the federal, state and local levels, a damaging statement was included in a report released by the National Research Council (NRC), and a local science board questioned the project. The NRC report supported indirect potable reuse, provided the projects met specific conditions – which the San Diego project did.

However, there was one clause included in the executive summary of the report, entitled *Issues in Potable Reuse: The Viability of Augmenting Drinking Water Supplies with Reclaimed Water*, which stated "indirect potable reuse should be an option of last resort." During the 1998 campaign, one City Council candidate used the project as an issue, claiming that the city was proposing to take wastewater from affluent communities and provide it as drinking water to those less affluent. One assembly member running for reelection sent direct mail to constituents that sensationalized health dangers from the project. The project and city council members who supported it were ridiculed in advertisements run by a candidate for congress against one of those candidates.

The County of San Diego's Science Advisory Board said the project required more study related to potential health consequences of minute quantities of a multiplicity of chemical contaminants that might not be removed during the advanced water treatment process. The combination of these events caused the San Diego City Council to put the project on hold in 1999. Ironically, a short time after the city council action, the San Diego County Grand Jury issued a report supporting the project.

Patricia Tennyson said that the lesson to be learned is that the label "Toilet to Tap" cannot be avoided, emerging unknown contaminants remain a concern for some members of the public, and indirect potable reuse projects can be vulnerable to political agendas. In addition, she advised project proponents that competing water supplies might look more attractive, especially if they are cost competitive, so it is important to underscore the need for multiple water sources to ensure a reliable supply.

Discussion followed Ms. Tennyson's presentation.

B. Comments, Constraints, Obstacles and Issues of Concern

The workgroup discussed the issues related to public acceptance of recycled water. The following comments were made.

1. Focus on non-potable uses that can be promoted immediately.
 - Public favors the reclaimed water for non-potable uses even if not economical. Groundwater recharge is not as expensive as dual piping. However, the closer the water is to being classified as potable, the harder it is to accept.
 - Industry has not fully embraced non-potable uses. We must first tackle acceptance for non-potable uses, before addressing potable acceptance.
 - Water is a legacy left for our children. The reclaimed water should be reserved for non-potable uses.
 - The environmental justice community is not concerned with the non-potable uses.
2. Develop a strategy for "discussing" in-direct potable reuse with the public
 - The education void about water sources makes the public ripe for political manipulation.
 - "Education" has a connotation of brainwashing. We need to inform the public, not educate them.
 - Public not informed about water supply, or from where their water originates.
 - How much time is required to achieve a well-informed public?
 - Producing brochures versus getting them to the public.
 - Public distrusts the government.
3. Include consumers in the decision-making process of recycled water – value their judgment.
 - People will pay for value, not necessarily lowest cost.
 - The public is not interested in wastewater treatment. They want to know the cost, safety factors, and drought resistance. Do not underestimate the public's ability to understand the root issues. Closely examine the project as an investment. Identify the safety factors. If the risk factors are high, the benefits should outweigh them.
 - In large developments drought reliability is a factor in the acceptance. In fact, one cross connection incident resulted in no public outcry.
 - Projects take a long time. The people consulted at the beginning may be gone by the project's completion. Therefore, the projects need on-going public involvement.
 - The public should be part of the decision making process. Public participation may be required by CEQA.

- Put projects up to a public vote on the ballot as voting motivates people to read and become informed.
- Do not have to win first vote. School bonds often take 2 to 3 times before voter approval. Need well-defined campaign.
- Voting subjects projects to political manipulation.
- People want oversight on bonds after vote.
- Let public be your mouthpiece, can use a task force to sell the project.
- We should **not** avoid talking to groups known to oppose or are skeptical of project.

C. White Paper Assignments

1. Overall coordination and task keeper – Ane Deister
2. Preamble/background of reuse – John Morris
3. Identification of the problems associated with reuse (what are the problems of public perception) – Francis Spivey-Webber
4. Value-based decision making for market development (how do we engage the public)– Marguerite Young
5. Selling non-potable uses – Examples of best practices – Kirk Bone
6. Public policy and politics – Suzanne Arena
7. Strategies for discussing indirect portable uses – Bill Van Wagoner

D. Future Workgroup Meeting Dates

September 4 meeting
 October 30 meeting

State of California
Department of Water Resources
State Water Resources Control Board
Department of Health Services

**The Public Education & Outreach Workgroup
of the
2002 Recycled Water Task Force**

First Meeting 16 July 02
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
402 West Broadway, Chamber Boardroom, 10th Floor
San Diego, California 92101-3503

Teleconference Number: 1-888-455-9641
Passcode: 31423#

MEETING AGENDA (09:30 to 12:00)

Self-introduction of meeting attendees

Public perception and acceptance of recycled water

Public education programs for recycled water

Discuss recycled water projects challenged by public acceptance

*Overview of previous work such as the work done by committees for the National
Research Council*

Identify a strategy and outline for the workgroup's white paper

Examples of "best practice" public participation in major capital projects

*Venues for the Task Force to reach out to various entities interested in water
recycling*

Establishment of a Timetable to the Workgroup

Public comments during the discussion